

FALLEN ANGELS A LESSON TO FALLEN MEN

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A SERMON
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*“God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell,
and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”
2 Peter 2:4.*

“THESE are ancient things.” Most men hunger after the latest news, let us on this occasion go back upon the earliest records, and think of the aged past, before man was made. It does us good to look back upon the past of God’s dealings with His creatures, herein lies the value of history. We should not confine our attention to God’s dealings with men, but we should observe how He acts towards another order of beings—how He dealt with angels before man had become the second sinner. If angels transgress, what is His conduct towards them? This study will enlarge our minds, and show us great principles in their wider sweep. We shall inevitably make mistakes in our judgment as to God’s conduct towards men if we do not remember sufficiently how He has dealt with beings that are in certain respects much superior to the human race. By seeing how God treated the rebellions angels, light may be cast upon His dealings with us, and thereby misapprehensions may be removed.

We shall go to our subject at once, asking aid from the Spirit of all grace. We will first view the mysterious fact of the fall of the angels, and their casting away, *for our warning*. Then, secondly, we shall regard the fact of the hopeless doom of the angels who sinned as it stands in contrast to the amazing mercy of the Lord towards men. Thus our second head will lead us to view the text *for our admiration*, I hope for the increase of our grateful love and reverent wonder.

I. First, then, let us consider our text FOR OUR WARNING. “God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.” Behold here a wonder of wickedness, angels sin; a wonder of justice, God spared them not; a wonder of punishment, He cast them down to hell; a wonder of future vengeance, for they are reserved unto judgment! Here are deep themes, and terrible. Black as tempest are the facts, and flashes of terrible lightning flame forth from them.

Let us receive a warning, first, against *the deceivableness of sin*; for whoever we may be, *we may never reckon that, on account of our position or condition, we shall be free from the assaults of sin*, or even certain of not being overcome by it. Notice that these who sinned were angels in heaven, so that there is no necessary security in the most holy position. We know that they were in heavenly places, for it was from that high abode that they were cast down to hell, by the terrible right hand of the Eternal King. These angels, that kept not their first estate, but sinned against God, dwelt with their brethren in the courts of the Most High, they seemed to be, as it were, walled round with fire to keep out all evil from them. Their communications were only with perfect spirits like themselves, but yet, as they were undergoing probation, they were made capable of choosing evil if they willed to do so, or of cleaving to good if their hearts were steadfast with their God. There were none about them to tempt them to evil, they were, on the contrary, surrounded with every good and holy influence, they saw God, and lived in His courts, they conversed with seraphim and cherubim. Their daily engagements were all of a holy order, worship and service were their duty and delight. Their company was select; there were no lapsed classes among them to render the moral atmosphere impure. They were not only in a paradise, but in the central abode of God Himself. Yet evil entered into the breasts of angels—even envy, ambition, pride, rebellion, and they fell, fell never to rise again—

*“High in the bright and happy throng,
Satan, a tall archangel sat;
Among the morning stars he sung,
Till sin destroyed his heavenly state.
'Twas sin that hurled him from his throne.*

*Groveling in fire the rebel lies:
‘How are you sunk in darkness down,
Son of the morning, from the skies!’”*

Beloved hearer, this should teach us not to presume upon anything connected with our position here below. You may be the child of godly parents who watch over you with sedulous care, and yet you may grow up to be a man of Belial. You may never enter a haunt of iniquity, your journeys may be only to and from the house of God, and yet you may be a bond slave of iniquity. The house in which you live may be none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven through your father’s prayers, and yet you may yourself live to blaspheme. Your reading may be bound up with the Bible, your companions may be of the choicest, your talk may concern holy things, you may be as if you were in the garden of the Lord, shut in to everything that is good, and every evil shut out from you, and yet you may have no part nor lot with the people of God. As there were a Ham and an ungodly Canaan even in Noah’s Ark, so may it turn out that you may be such in the very midst of all that should make you gracious and sanctified. It is unhappy indeed to read the annals of human life, and to meet with men that have gone from their mother’s side—have gone from where their father knelt in prayer—have gone out from brothers and sisters whose piety was not only unquestionable, but even remarkable—and they have gone to be leaders in every form of wickedness. Many of the enemies of the cross of Christ have been so trained in godliness that we find it hard to believe that they can indeed be so vile, an apostle must declare it with tears before he is believed. The sons of God they seemed to be, but they turned out to be sons of perdition after all. Let no man, therefore, arise and shake himself, as though no sins could ever bind him, because he feels himself to be a very Samson through his connections and surroundings. Yes, sir, it may be that you shall fall—fall foully, fall desperately, unless the grace of God is in you—fall so as never to come to God, and Christ, and find eternal life. It was so with these angels. The best natural thing that creation can work is not sufficient to preserve the fickle creature from sin. Regeneration must come in—the work of the Holy Spirit, a yet higher work than the material creating power of God, or else you may put the creature where you please, and that creature may be perfect and yet sin will reach and destroy him. You and I are far from perfect. We are not angels unfallen. We are not angels at all, but we have evil hearts within us, therefore let us not imagine for a moment that the most select position can screen us from the worst of sin.

The next thought is that *the greatest possible ability, apparently consecrated, is still nothing to rely upon* as a reason why we should not yet fall so low as to prostitute it all to the service of the worst of evils. Angels are beings of remarkable power. We know that they have amazing intelligence and beauty. We read of one whose face was like that of an angel of God. When a thing is spoken of as being exceedingly good, it is often connected with angels, “men did eat angels’ food.” It is supposed that everything with regard to them is of superior order and of refined quality. I suppose that a spirit that is not cumbered with flesh and blood, as we are, must be delivered from much that hampers and beclouds. Oftentimes a clear judgment is dimmed by a headache, or an attack of indigestion. Anything that affects the body drags down the mind, but these angelic beings are delivered from such weakness, and they are clothed with a glory of strength, and beauty, and power.

Hear then and observe! However great Lucifer was, he degenerated into Satan; the Son of the Morning became Apollyon the Destroyer. However excellent the fallen angels may once have been, they have now become potent only for mischief, their wisdom has curdled into cunning, and their strength has soured into a vicious force, so that no man may say within himself, “I am a clear thinker, therefore I shall never become a blaspheming infidel,” or, “I am gifted in prayer, therefore I shall never become a blasphemer.” You know not what you may become. There is a great difference between gift in prayer and grace in prayer, gift will breed pride, and pride will ensure destruction; it is only grace that can preserve unto eternal glory. There is also a great difference between office and person, therefore, a man may not say, “I am a minister, I shall be kept faithful in the church of God.” Ah me! But we have seen leaders turn aside, and we need not marvel, for if angels fall, what man may think that he can stand? To trust our office as a security is to rest upon a broken reed. The grace of God can keep the least and weakest of us, but apart from that heavenly power how dare any man hope to be preserved to the end. Self-confidence is the beginning of declension. He that reckons that he is past temptation is already entangled in its net. We must never presume. Angels fell, why should not men? An angel occupies a high position near the throne of God, “Are they not all ministering spirits?” We have evidence in Scripture

that they are called on grand occasions to discharge high commissions for the King of kings. And yet these courtiers, these household messengers of the palace of heaven, these domestics of glory, even these went astray, and fell, and turned to devils. Let no man dream that because he occupies an office in the church his salvation is therefore secure, an apostle fell. The arrows of the prince of darkness can reach the highest seats of the synagogue. The high places of the field of service are not free from danger; no, they are the more perilous as they are the more notable. The powers of darkness make their direst onset upon the foremost soldiers of the cross, hoping to overthrow the standard-bearers, and create confusion throughout the camp.

Neither, dear friends—to continue my warning—must any of us suppose that we shall be kept by the mere fact that we are engaged in the most sublime possible office. Apart from the perpetual miracle of God's grace, nothing can keep us from declension, apostasy, and spiritual death. "Oh, but I spend my time," one may say—"I spend my time wholly in the service of God! I go from door to door seeking the lost souls of men, as a city missionary," or "I conduct a large class in the school, and I have brought many to the Savior." All this is good, but if you trust in it for your standing before God it will certainly fail you. If any one of us were to say, "But I am a minister, called to offer prayer, and to preach the precious word, my engagements are so sanctified, they bring me into such hallowed fellowship with holy things, that it is not possible that I should fall"—this would be the height of folly. We need not go beyond the pale of professed ministers of Christ to find specimens of every infamy of which man is capable. After having preached to others there is grave cause for trembling lest we are castaways ourselves. No, there is nothing in the most sacred office in the church to preserve us or our characters. Office, if we trust in it, may even become, as in the case of Judas, a Tarpeian rock, from which we may be cast down to our destruction, for the angelic office in heaven did not keep the angels from being hurled over the battlements of glory when once they dared to sin. Let not the angels of the churches hope to be kept from falling unless He that bears the seven stars in His right hand shall keep them even to the end.

I want you to notice, as a great warning, that *this sin of the angels was not prevented even by the fullest happiness.* Oh, what a change, dear friends, from the joy they once knew, when they were the servants of God, to being cast down to hell in chains of darkness, as they now are! The devils go about the world tempting men, but they are never released from their darkness. They cannot escape from the prison which they make for themselves—the blackness and horror of God's judgment always shut them in, be they where they may. What a difference between that and the throne of God, and the vision thereof, which was once their joy! The service of God was once theirs, but now the slavery of evil holds them in iron bonds. Once they took delight in the high praises of their Creator, and now they curse Him in their heart of hearts. Once, on high days, when the servants of God came together, they sang for joy as they beheld new worlds created by their great Lord and King, now, everything He does is as gall and wormwood to them. They curse Him and themselves, and they are busily occupied always in seeking to pull down His kingdom, and to quench His light among the sons of men. Oh, the misery of these old offenders! They once were supremely happy, but this happiness of theirs did not suffice to preserve their fidelity. The most golden wages will not keep a servant loyal to the kindest of masters. The most blessed experience will not preserve a soul from sinning. You may come here and be greatly blessed under a sermon, and sweetly sing, and pray with intense fervor, and seem carried up to the gates of heaven by it, but do remember that no feelings of joy or happiness can be relied upon as sufficient holdfasts to keep us near the Lord. We have seen men drink of the cup of the Lord till they appeared to be full of love to Him, and yet they have gone back to be drunken with the cup of devils. We have known men preach the gospel, and yet afterwards blaspheme every truth of revelation, and deny the inspiration of the Book of God. We have known them appear to be among the holiest and the best, and yet they have come at last to be common frequenters of the most evil haunts of the city, and to be ringleaders in folly. Is not this a dreadful thing, and should it not be a warning to every one of us? "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." There is one who is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before His presence with exceedingly great joy, but if we do not trust in Him, and abide in Him, we shall perish. If we dare to confide in our position, our ability, our office, our service, or our experience, we shall, sooner or later, discover that we are prone to sin, and that when we sin God will not spare us any more than He spared the angels that sinned.

This warning, be it noted, applies itself to the very foulest of sin. The angels did not merely sin and lose heaven, but they passed beyond all other beings in sin, and made themselves fit denizens for hell.

When Christ was describing the wickedest of men, He said that he was a devil. “One of you is a devil,” was His expression, for the devil is the wickedest form of existence. Now, is it not singular that after being in heaven it remained possible for an angel to become so dreadful a being as a devil in hell now is? If any of us come very near to the kingdom, and yet the life of God is not in us; if we are joined with the church of God, and perform holy duties, and yet depend upon ourselves, and so fall into sin, we may fall into the foulest of sins. I do not think that Judas could have been what he was if he had not been an apostle. The best of that which looks like goodness must be used as the raw material with which to make a traitor who will sell his Master. The devils have gone into open war with God, the same beings that once bowed before His awful majesty are now openly and defiantly at war with the God that made them. They once could sing their chorales with delight and day without night circle the throne of God rejoicing, but now they blaspheme, and rage, and rave against all that is good in earth or heaven. They go about like roaring lions seeking whom they may devour—even they who once would have been ministering spirits, eager to save and bless. They were once loyal subjects, but now they are traitors, rebels, seducers. They try to lead the people of God astray. They do their utmost to stir up sin in every human bosom. So bad have they become that their leader actually met the Son of God Himself, and tempted Him to fall down and worship him. Was ever such infamous, such infernal impudence as for the devil himself to ask the eternal Son of God to do him homage? O base proposal, that the purity of the Most High should bow itself before the impiety of a fallen spirit! Yet, so far have devils proceeded that in them evil has reached its ripeness and maturity. Let this be a lesson to us. I must not for a moment think that apart from the keeping of God’s Spirit I am incapable even of the foulest sin. Recall the story of Hazeel. When the prophet told him what he would do, he exclaimed in amazement, “Is your servant a dog that he should do this thing?” He was not only dog enough to seek the Syrian throne, but he was devil enough to suffocate his master with a wet cloth, and then to carry out with eagerness all those terrible deeds of barbarity which the prophet had foretold. We may yet do horrible deeds which we think ourselves incapable of doing. How much of devil there lies within the unregenerate heart no man can tell. O my unrenowned hearer, I would not slander you, but I must warn you, there are all the makings of a hell within your heart! It only needs that the restraining hand of God should be removed, and you would come out in your true colors, and those are the colors of iniquity. If it were not for the restraints of society and providence, there would be eruptions of evil, even in the most moral, sufficient to shake society to its foundations. An officer in India had tamed a leopard. From the time when it was quite a kitten he had brought it up, till it went about the house like a cat, and everybody played with it. But he was sitting in his chair one day asleep, and the leopard licked his hand—licked it in all innocence, but as he licked, the skin was broken, and the taste of blood came to the leopard, and from that moment it was not content to dwell with men. It rushed forth to kill, and was no more at ease till it reached the jungle. That leopard, though tamed, was a leopard still. So a man, sobered by moral motives, but unchanged in heart, is a fallen man still, and the taste of blood, I mean the taste of sin, will soon reveal the tiger in him. Wash a Russian, and you find a Tartar; tempt a moralist, and you discover a sinner! The thin crust of goodness, which is formed by education, soon disappears under temptation. You may be everything that looks like good, but except you have been born again you are still capable of the direst evil. It does seem a horrible thing to me that there should stream from a man’s lips the foulest blasphemy, and yet he that utters it was once accustomed to sing in the house of God, and bow his knee with the saints. O God; that ever a creature bidding fair to serve his Maker, should sink to such a depth! Yet such horrors abound! The vessel which adorned the lordly festival is broken and thrown on the dunghill, and even so the excellent and honorable are defiled and cast away. I know what some are whispering, “I never could become an open reprobate!” How do you know that? You already question the warnings of Scripture; you may go further before long. He that is the most sure is the most insecure, but he that cries, “Hold You me up,” shall be made to stand. Be this our confession, “O Lord, I know that I shall become utterly vile except Your sovereign grace prevent!” In humility let us cast ourselves upon the mighty grace of God, and we shall be kept. In fervent earnestness let us cry to the strong for strength, and we shall not be overcome by evil. He that presumes shall fall, he that confides shall stand.

The text may lead us a little farther before we leave it, by giving us *a warning against the punishment of sin* as well as against the sin itself. Read this—“God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.” They were very great; they were very powerful, but God did not spare them for all that. If sinners are kings, princes, magistrates, millionaires, God will cast them into hell. If they were

commanders of all the forces of the world, he that is a just and righteous judge would not spare them because of their dignities and powers. “God spared not the angels,” why should He spare you, you great ones of the earth? They were very numerous, too. I do not know how many there were, but we read of legions of devils on one occasion. But God did not spare angelic sinners because there were so many of them. He made room in hell for them all, and set them in darkness and in bonds, every one of them. God will not spare sinful men because of their millions, “the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” Be they few or many, sinners must be punished, and God will not turn away His wrath from those who do iniquity. God did not spare the rebel angels because of their unity. I never heard of devils quarrelling, it is very amazing in Scripture to notice their unanimity—their concord with one another, but “though hand joins in hand, yet shall not the wicked go unpunished.” You unbelievers may combine together to hate and oppose the gospel, but it matters not, God will deal with your confederacies and break up your unities, and make you companions in hell even as you have been comrades in sin. “God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.”

Neither did He spare them because of their craft. There were never such subtle creatures as these are—so wise, so deep, so crafty, but these serpents and all the brood of them had to feel the power of God’s vengeance, notwithstanding their cunning. Men often escape at the bar of their country because of their long-headed ways of evading the law, they keep within legal bounds, and yet are great villains, or if they go over the line they hire a clever tongue to plead for them, be they as guilty as they may, and through crafty pleading they escape from a righteous sentence. Thus it is with men, but no counselors can pervert judgment with the Most High. He will deal out justice even to a hair’s breadth, and He will by no means spare the guilty. “God spared not the angels that sinned,” why should He spare any guilty son of Adam? Be sure that He will not spare any one of us, if we live in sin. Unless we accept the way of salvation by Jesus Christ our sin will find us out, and God will find our sin out, and He will cast us also down to the place prepared for the devil and his angels. Let the flatterers of today preach what they may, the Lord will punish men who live and die in their sins. He spared not the angels that sinned; certainly He will not spare men if they sin. Let this stand as a warning to us.

II. But now I want to carry you on and ask all your attention to this second point for OUR ADMIRATION.

I want you to admire, dear friends, the fact that, *though angels fell the saints of God are made to stand*. The angels sinned fatally, but the saints of God “cannot sin, for they are born of God.” You know the sense in which the apostle means that, not that we do not all sin, but that we do not so sin as to depart from the living God, give up our allegiance to Him, and cease to be His loving children. No. “He keeps himself,” says the Scripture, “and that wicked one touches him not.” But what a wonder it is! I tell you, when the tales of God’s people shall be written, and the records of the saints shall be read by the light of glory, we shall be miracles of grace to ourselves and to one another. “Oh,” we shall say, “I had almost gone, but the hand of grace interposed, and snatched me from slipping over the awful precipice. My mind almost consented to that sin, and yet I was able to cry out, ‘How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?’ There was great stress of weather, and my poor boat was almost on the rocks, but still, though I grazed the bottom, yet I did not make shipwreck.” “Oh, if I had been left at that moment,” one will say, “what would have become of me? Though I had tasted of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come, yet, had I been left to myself at that hour, I would have so fallen that I could never again have been brought to repentance. But I was kept, preserved by as great a miracle as if a spark should fall into the sea and yet burn on, or a straw should be blown into a heated furnace and should not be consumed, or a moth should be trodden on by a giant and yet remain uncrushed—

*“Kept alive with death so near,
I to God the glory give.”*

To think that men should stand where angels fall! We are by sovereign grace called to be as near to God as the angels ever were, and in some respects we are nearer still. We are the bodyguard of Christ, His chosen ones with whom He communes. We are the table companions of our Lord, we eat of His bread, and drink of His cup, and are made partakers with Him. We are lifted up to be one with Him, and are made to be “members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones,” yet God’s eternal unbounded power keeps us in the day of temptation, and leads us so that if we go through the rivers we are not drowned, and when we pass through the fires we are not burned. O, the splendor of triumphant grace! Neither the glory of our calling, nor the unworthiness of our original, shall cause us to be traitors, we shall neither

perish through pride nor lust, but the new nature within us shall overcome all sin, and abide faithful to the end.

“Now, unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, unto Him be honor and glory, and dominion and power forever and ever.” I cannot look back on my past life without feeling the tears rush into my eyes at the remembrance of how I have been preserved in the hour of trial. We could not possibly tell, nor would we wish to tell in public, of those hours of weakness, those times of strong delusion, those moments of foot slipping and of heart fainting, which have happened to us. We grieve as we remember our worse than childish weaknesses. And yet we have not stained our garments, we have not dishonored the holy name by which we are named, we have not been suffered to turn aside from the straightness of our path so as to bring grief to the Holy Spirit and dishonor to the Church of God. Verily this is a wonder. Mr. Bunyan tells us that Christian by the light of day looked back on the Valley of the Shadow of Death which he had passed through in the nighttime, and saw what a narrow path he had kept, and what a swamp there was on one side, and what a miry place on the other, and where the hobgoblins were, and all the fiends of hell. When he looked back on it he was lost in admiration and gratitude. So it must be, and will be with you if through a dangerous way you have yet held on in your plain course, and have not turned from your integrity. We shall be brim full of gratitude and love. Grace shall reign unto eternal life. Redeemed men shall stand where angels fall, for God shall keep them. He is able to hold them up, and He will do it even to the end.

Now, let us learn another lesson full of admiration, and that is *that God should deal in grace with men and not with angels*—

*“From heaven the sinning angels fell,
And wrath and darkness chained them down;
But man, vile man, forsook his bliss,
And mercy lifts him to a crown.
Amazing work of sovereign grace
That could distinguish rebels so!
Our guilty treasons called aloud
For everlasting fetters too.”*

Now, you that do not believe in the doctrine of election, but kick at it, and bite your lips at the mention of it, listen to this! God gave fallen angels no Savior, no gospel, no space for repentance, yet He gives these to men, why is this? What reason was there? Can you conceive one? Why did God pass the fallen angels by, and yet look in love upon the sons of men? “Oh,” says one, “perhaps fallen angels were the greater offenders of the two.” I do not think it; certainly many men go far, to rival devils in rebellion.

“Perhaps men were tempted and angels were not.” Stop; let us be clear on this point. Very likely Satan, the first angel that fell, was not tempted, but just as likely all the others were. Their leader tempted them as much as Eve tempted Adam, or the serpent tempted Eve. The mass of fallen angelhood may have been seduced by the example of Satan, the Prince of devils. I do not therefore see any great difference as to that matter. This I do know, that some men are greater sinners than devils. “No” you say, “how is that?” I answer that the devil never yet rejected free grace and dying love, the devil never yet struggled against the Holy Spirit in his own conscience, the devil never yet refused the mercy of God. These supreme pinnacles of wickedness are only reached by you who are hearers of the gospel, and yet cast its precious message behind your backs. Singular it is that God should deal in mercy with men who act so wickedly, while yet He never spoke of mercy to the fallen angels, nor set before them terms of peace. They were given over there and then to be bound in chains of darkness until the judgment of the last great day.

Notice that God gave the angels no respite. He did not wait for them to continue in sin for years, but when they sinned, they fell. The punishment followed hard on the crime. They cast God out of their hearts, and He cast them out of heaven. How different is His conduct to some of you! You have sinned through a series of years. How old are you? Twenty years? Thirty? Forty? Fifty? Sixty? Seventy? Is it eighty years that you have lived in rebellion against God? And yet He has not cut you down! Wonderful patience! The angels He banished from His presence at once. He spared not the angels, but He has spared you. Why is this?

The Lord never entered into any parley with the angels—never invited them to repentance or to mercy. Oh, but what parleys God has had with some of you! I am not the only one who has entreated and persuaded you, but yet with some of you I have pleaded very earnestly that you would turn from the er-

ror of your ways and live—that you would believe in Christ and find eternal life. But why should the Lord treat concerning peace to men and not with fallen angels?

For the angels God never made a covenant of grace, “ordered in all things and sure.” They broke their covenant of works, and they fell never to rise again. For the angels there was never a sacrifice, no dying Son of God for them, no bloody sweat and wounded hands and feet for them! And yet a great atonement is prepared for men. What sovereignty of God’s grace is here displayed! He opens the golden gates of love for us, and shuts the iron gate on beings nobler than we are. The Spirit of God strives with us, but He never strives with fallen angels. Devils are left to themselves, but concerning man the Lord cries, “how can I give you up?” How justly God might have left us alone, for we have been given unto idols, and yet He follows us with the admonitions of His mercy.

For the devils there is no pardon, no hope, no gate of heaven, and yet there is all this for men. Oh, dear hearers, do not, I pray you, reject these choice gifts of Almighty love. If God is so especially gracious to the race of men, let not man become singularly ungrateful to his God, presumptuously wanton in his sin. Let us turn unto the Lord with full purpose of heart, seeing that He turns to us with such specialty of favor.

I am sure that it is a great wonder and a thing for admiration that God should look upon us and not on fallen angels, because, as I have already said, angels certainly are not worse sinners than some men have been. Angels are not more willful than we have been, for we have sinned against light and knowledge with deliberate intent and purpose.

Angels are certainly more valuable, if God had wanted one of the two races to be employed as His servants, the best would have been chosen, and these are not men, but angels. Angels can do more for God than we can, yet He has chosen us. Angels must, surely, be more missed than men, their downfall made a great gap in heaven. We go there to fill the space, and to repair the breach which was made when they were cast down from glory. But, surely, it was easier to restore the angels who came from heaven than to take up inferior creatures who had never been there. If we make a distinction between men in the distribution of our charity, we very properly say, “Let us first do good to those who would be the most miserable without it.” Now, men have never known heaven, and consequently cannot so much feel the loss of it as those who have been there and have fallen from it. We are like people that have always been poor, but the angels have been in heaven, and are therefore like wealthy persons who have come down to poverty. What a hell to them to be out of heaven! What misery to those spirits to miss the eternal glories which they once enjoyed! One would have thought, therefore, that God would have restored the angels before He upraised the human race. But He has not, He has redeemed us, and left the elder race of rebels unrestored. No man knows why, and in our amazement we cry,—“How is this?” Whence this election of grace?

Tell me, you who would leave God no choice, but would deify the will of man, what all this means? Where is your proud theory that God is bound to treat all alike, as if we had a claim on God? I point you to the fallen angels, and what can you say?

Sometimes princes, when they mean to give a pardon according to their will, say to themselves, “We will pardon the man who will be most dangerous if we leave him to be our enemy.” Now, bad as men are, and great enemies of God as they become, yet the devil has more power to harm God than a man can have, and yet God does not pardon the devil. He lets Satan go on with all his dreadful power and do his worst in reviling his Lord, and yet the Lord’s mercy comes to us whose powers are within so narrow a range, compared with the fallen angel, He makes choice of puny man to receive His grace.

One would think that to restore an angel was easier and more agreeable to the plan of the universe than to exalt fallen man. There is nothing to do but to put an angel back in his place, but men must be taken into a new existence. Christ Himself must come and be a man, and to wash away the sin of man, Christ must die, nothing more could have been needed had devils been saved. I cannot conceive the salvation of angels to be more difficult than the salvation of men; I rather conceive it to have been the easier thing of the two if the Lord had so willed it. And yet, involving as it did the incarnation of the Son of God and His death to make atonement, the infinitely gracious Father condescended to ordain that He would take up men, and would not take up the fallen angels. It is a marvel, it is a mystery. I put it before you for your admiration. Oh, sirs, do not despise it! Let not such amazing sovereignty of grace be treated with contempt by any of us. Talk no more about the injustice of the election of certain men, for if you do the devils will bear witness that you are quibbling at the royal prerogative of the great Lord who says, “I

will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

Now, I think that I see in this *a great argument with God’s people*. Has the Lord given up angels and chosen you? It reminds me of that famous text, “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable, and I have loved you. Therefore I will give men for you, and people for your life. I gave Egypt for your ransom; Ethiopia and Seba for you.” See, He has passed angels by, and He has made choice of us, what a height of grace! Behold how He loves us! What shall we do in return? Let us do angels’ work. Come, brothers and sisters, let us glow with such a fire of devotion as might have burned in an angel’s heart. Let us be as intensely zealous as a redeemed angel might have been. Let us glorify God as angels would have done had they been restored and made again to taste divine favor and infinite love. What manner of people ought we to be? What manner of lives ought we to live? What manner of consecration ought to be upon us? Should not our whole being live unto God?

I have given you this somewhat in the rough, for time flies, but think it over, and profit by it. Think it over, you ungodly ones, and do not cast away mercy like this. When you read, “He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham,” be full of surprise, and fly at once to Jesus. And O you saints, as you read it, say to yourselves—

*“For more love than seraphs know
We will like seraphs burn.”*

God bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John 17.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—261, 668, 369.**

TO MY CONGREGATION OF HEARERS AND READERS:

By the great mercy of God I was permitted to leave my house on Tuesday and commence my journey to the South of France. It seemed impossible for me to recover while in our trying climate, and so, in great weakness, I have ventured to make a move. I beg your prayers for my recovery, and especially for the sanctification of my grievous pains, so that they may turn out to be for God’s glory. Week by week I shall carefully prepare these Sermons, and I hope they will be attended with the divine blessing. In them I hope to keep up my communion with thousands of dear friends, though we are divided by many a league.

Friends at the Tabernacle, I have heard of one enthusiastic friend who so misses my ministry that *he wished he could fall asleep till I return*. That is exactly what I hope you will not do. Be doubly alive. Seek for a revival of religion, labor for it. Everything passes through the fire while the Builder is absent, let it be seen that our building is not wood, hay, and stubble, which will disappear, but precious metal that will remain to the glory of God. **KEEP UP THE PRAYER MEETINGS.** Sustain every holy work. Live near to God. Continue in concord. Devote yourselves wholly unto the Lord.

With Christian love to my dear hearers and readers,

I am yours, for I am Christ’s,
C. H. SPURGEON.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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